



California Postsecondary Education Commission

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UC Davis Awarded \$273,127 Improving Teacher Quality Grant

SACRAMENTO — October 22, 2007 — The University of California, Davis has won funding for a new professional development project to help improve teaching in kindergarten through second grade in the core content area of mathematics. The university was awarded a four-year grant of \$273,127 by the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) in a statewide competition. The project, titled “Strategic Alliance of Robla/UC Davis/Sacramento COE” will work closely with 26 teachers in K-2 classrooms in Robla School District, a small district in north Sacramento. The teachers will work in short institutes and monthly after-school meetings to improve their understanding of children’s mathematical thinking, specifically the strategies children use to solve problems.

Modeled on an earlier, smaller project in another school district, the project hopes to build teachers’ competency in Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI), which research has shown to be highly effective in helping primary grade teachers improve their mathematics instruction. The Strategic Alliance will extend CGI to determine how best to meet the needs of English Language Learners and to consider how mathematical discussions can enhance children’s language development. UC Davis will coordinate with the Sacramento County Office of Education to implement the project; that office will help with the training and will also seek ways to replicate this model in other districts throughout the region.

The grant is part of the federal Improving Teacher Quality Program funded under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. It is the latest edition of a long-standing federal program aimed at improving student achievement through professional development for teachers. In the two decades that CPEC has administered the program, more than \$93 million in grants have been awarded to colleges and universities working with high-need K-12 schools throughout California. The 2007 grants all focus on supporting teachers in kindergarten through second grade in participating schools. They also require rigorous evaluation research to demonstrate how the professional development affects student achievement as well as teacher practice.

While the professional development provided by the grants is vitally needed, the research requirement is especially important, according to CPEC Executive Director Murray Haberman. He observed that “Being required to demonstrate the impact of the professional development on

student achievement, not just on teacher practice, is critical and supports CPEC's overall commitment to accountability in educational programs."

Olivia Singh, chair of the Commission, says the grants play an important role in making sure every student has a highly qualified teacher. "The program has had a long-term impact on helping teachers strengthen their content knowledge and their understanding of effective teaching strategies—key elements of education reform," noted Singh. "UC Davis and its partner schools should be proud of the quality of their proposal and its potential for improving teaching and learning in Sacramento County."

The California Postsecondary Education Commission advises the Governor and Legislature on higher education policy and fiscal issues. Its primary focus is to ensure that the state's educational resources are used effectively to provide Californians with postsecondary education opportunities. More information about the Commission and its work can be found on its website at www.cpec.ca.gov. For more information about the state program, contact Karen Humphrey, Administrator, Improving Teacher Quality Program, at 916-445-1504 or khumphrey@cpec.ca.gov. For information on the project described above, contact Dr. Rebecca Ambrose at 530-754-4831 or rcambrose@uscavis.edu.

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